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ABSTRACT

Evaluation of student learning and achievement in multicultural art programs should reflect the learning styles of students from diverse ethnic, racial, and class backgrounds. Traditional standardized tests measure factural knowledge and memorization skills never higher order thinking skills. Some authentic assessment measures include exhibitions, performances, process portfolios, and profiles of student characteristics. Many art educators advocate using socio-anthropological bases to study art works from diverse cultures. These bases are derived from anthropological methods such as interviews, observations, questionnaires, note-taking, and diary-keeping. If such anthropological methods are authentic for studying multicultural art, then they should be suitable for evaluating students progress and achievements. However, in order to implement such methods in the clasroom pre-service and in-service teacher education programs need to be developed to help teachers create the necessary assessment models. (KM)

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EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS IN MULTICULTURAL ART PROGRAMS

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EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS IN MULTICULTURAL ART PROGRAMS

Traditional standardized tests derive from behaviorist models that have a test-teach-test format and are measurement driven (Shepard in Kirst, 1991b). Most of these tests contain multiple-choice formats and are based on measurement of factual knowledge and isolated skills and memorization of procedures and do not require judgment, analysis, reflection, or higher level skills needed for generating arguments and constructing solutions to problems (Frederiksen & Collins, 1989). Standardized test scores have been used to evaluate educational programs; but the benefits of such testing have accrued mainly to institutions and have not directly served students (Martinez & Lipson, 1989).

Although traditional standardized testing is viewed by some educators as a political necessity and an opportunity to know how students achieve in terms of general aspects of education (Newman, 1990), assessment procedures that approximate real-life, authentic situations with integrated, complex, and challenging tasks are more appropriate to use to assess individual achievement and higher level thinking skills. According to Worthen and Spandel (1991), standardized tests should represent only a small part of assessment of student learning and teacher-centered assessment should play a greater role. They believe that traditional standardized tests can 1) measure a limited range of student knowledge, and 2) are racially, culturally, and socially biased, and 3) can be used to label students in ways that may not positively effect their learning.

Art learning through critical inquiry, problem solving, values clarification, and discovery learning can be best assessed through authentic means (Hamblen, 1988). Most authentic assessment of learning in art is being conducted by individual teachers who are creators and consumers of assessment practices. These teachers have a much greater influence on student learning and achievement than do most traditional, large scale evaluation programs (Nickerson, 1989). The task of assessing most aspects of student learning authentically, therefore, should be placed in the hands of art teachers who can make informed judgments and are the best evaluators of their own students'

growth in the process of learning.

Authentic Assessment and Art Education

If a goal of education is to have students apply knowledge in different situations and employ what they have learned to create new understandings (Hiebart & Calfee, 1989), then authentic assessment of art learning that attends to real-life situations of making and responding to works of art would be most appropriate. Criteria for authentic assessment set forth by Archbald and Newmann (1988) and Wiggins (1989), that have relevancy for art education, include (1) evaluating students on tasks that approximate disciplined inquiry, (2) considering knowledge wholistically rather than in fragmented parts, (3) valuing student achievement in and of itself and apart from whether it is being assessed, (4) attending to both processes and products of teaching and learning, (5) educating students to assess their own achievements in consort with assessments by others, and (6) expecting students to present and defend their work written or orally and publicly, (7) how well do they work together.

Some authentic measures of assessment have been demonstrated to be effective in art classrooms. These measures include exhibitions and performances that are public demonstrations of student achievement. They provide a means of solving problems that have multiple solutions and require analysis, integration of knowledge, and creativity. The time frame for preparation and planning is usually negotiated and students often write their own individualized education plans and evaluate their learning in conjunction with assessment of others.

Another form of authentic assessment is through what has become popularly known as 'process portfolios' (Gardner, 1990). These portfolios are purposeful collections of student work in progress and final products, in one or several areas, through which students become participants in, rather than objects of, their own assessments. Students are involved in selecting portfolio contents and developing criteria both for selection and judging their success and achievement. Using process portfolios as assessment measures allows students, as self-directed learners, to be viewed through a

wide lens in which they can be observed taking risks, solving problems creatively, and learning to judge their own performance and that of others. Evidence of learning, collected in process portfolios created in visual arts classes, can include letters, poems, essays, art works created with a range of visual art media and techniques, work in progress, sketches and completed works, journal entries and other forms of reflection, and teacher, student, and peer commentaries.

Another form of authentic assessment is use of locally designed profiles of behaviors and characteristics by which students are judged according to criteria such as work habits and learning abilities, art knowledge and skills, and desire and interest in art. Still another source of authentic assessment is journal entries that provide means for students to reflect upon their art learning experiences, confront and solve problems, and make plans for future art activities and experiences. Art teachers also can use structured and open-ended interviews to obtain similar information from all students as well as to help assess individual student achievements in art.

Assessment Procedures for Students from Diverse Backgrounds

Critics of testing have charged that many standardized testing procedures have been developed for middle class, white students in America. Students from diverse backgrounds, often referred to as 'minority students', usually are under-represented in one or more phases of the standardization or development processes of test construction (Evans, 1977). All students differ in their interests, learning styles, rate of learning, motivation, work habits, and personalities as well as their ethnicity, sex, and social class and it is these measures of diversity that standardized approaches to assessment usually ignore (Gordon, 1977). Students from diverse ethnic, racial, or social groups possess unique cultural characteristics that should be taken into consideration when assessment measures are being developed.

In the past, practices in the Western art tradition mainly stressed individuality rather than collective art making, originality and uniqueness rather than temporariness, and abstract forms rather than meanings derived

from cultural contexts (Hart, 1991). Works of art, viewed pluralistically, can be studied in the contexts in which the works were created or from more traditional Western standpoints in which rules and standards are derived from formal criticism. Students' processes and products in oral, written, and constructed forms can be assessed from traditional Western or from non-Western perspectives. For students who come from diverse cultural backgrounds, art work created collectively, within specific cultural traditions, not intended as a permanent products, or with symbolism specific to the student's own race, class, or ethnic background would be assessed more equitably if flexible and personally constructed criteria are developed to assess student achievement. Students and teachers need to become more aware of the socially constructed criteria they use for evaluation and to adjust these criteria when appropriate. Through the use of authentic assessment measures described previously, achievement of individual students can be measured against past achievements rather than against traditional, standardized norms or criteria. The skills and accomplishments students bring to a classroom can be taken into account and their individual progress can be monitored in appropriate and meaningful ways through authentic assessment.

A number of art educators have stressed using socio-anthropological bases for studying art works from a variety of cultures (Chalmers, 1981, 1984; McFee, 1988; Nadaner, 1984). Such study focuses on socio-cultural contexts in which works of art are created and knowledge about the people who created them; it also includes folk and environmental arts from many cultures as well as traditional Western art. Art study from a socio-cultural point of view would be interdisciplinary and might be organized around themes such as politics, religion, social status, or technology.

Strategies for studying and teaching art from socio-anthropological bases are derived from anthropological methods such as interviews, observations, audio and visual recordings, questionnaires, written and oral histories, journal and diary keeping, note taking, photography, filming, tape recording, and survey taking (Hamblen, 1990; Wasson, Stuhr, & Petrovich-

Mwaniki, 1990). Anthropological methods also can be used to identify students' socio-cultural values and beliefs, and those in their community, that influence students' knowledge, skills, and valuing of art works created by themselves and others. Resources that can be used to identify students' values include written documents, audio visual resources, and personnel (Wasson, Stuhr, & Petrovich-Mwaniki, 1990).

If such anthropological methods, strategies, and resources for collecting information are suggested modes for studying and teaching multicultural art education, it seems evident that using authentic methods for assessing achievement of multicultural learnings of art students from diverse backgrounds would offer congruency in terms of goals and objectives. This would allow all students, from all backgrounds, to "explore variable aesthetic frameworks through recourse to contexts of local knowledge, specific environments, personal experience, sub-cultural values, and historical records" (Hamblen, 1990, p. 224).

Assessment of students' learnings and achievements, therefore, should reflect a multicultural art curriculum in terms of the goals and objectives that undergird such a curriculum. A variety of authentic means should be used for evaluation so that the learning styles of individual students from diverse ethnic, racial, and class backgrounds would be assessed equitably. Evaluation procedures should be used to improve teaching and learning rather than for sorting students into groups for different and often unequal opportunities. Although it will require long and concerted efforts to develop and implement equitable assessment measures for all students, the ends surely justify the means. Pre-service and in-service teacher education programs will need to be developed that would help educate teachers to create criteria and models related to teaching pluralistically and using authentic and appropriate assessment procedures to meet the needs of all students from all ethnic, racial, gender, and class backgrounds.

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